

6 Ways to Be the Best Firefighter Driver in Your Department

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- 1. Know the truck or apparatus better than anyone on your department.**
Find an experienced driver in your department that could be a mentor to you. Find if that person would be willing to teach you everything they know about the apparatus.
- 2. Understand (FULLY comprehend) the weight dynamics of the apparatus you drive.**
Simply put, this can only be learned by driving the vehicle. Learn and take mental note of how the apparatus responds to your accelerating, braking, and turning. By becoming experienced in the physics of the vehicle, you will be able to control the vehicle properly under real life, stressful driving conditions.
- 3. Create muscle memory for critical operator tasks.**
For instance, as an engine operator ("driver"), know exactly the steps you need to take to effectively operate the pump, and create muscle memory for that task by practicing it regularly. Speak the steps out loud to yourself. Become the best operator that performs exceptionally under stress by creating muscle memory for critical, life-dependant tasks.
- 4. Leave your emotions in your cubby.**
Don your bunker gear, but doff all decision-altering emotions where you slipped your boots on. Decision-altering emotions include: Anger, Pride, and Impatience. **If a driver/operator possesses any of those explosive emotions, he or she poses a serious life threat to personnel on the apparatus.** If you can master the control of your emotions, you very likely will be the best firefighter driver in your department.
- 5. Share what you know.**
As other rookies come behind you, they will want to know what you know about driving apparatus. By sharing what you know and becoming a mentor, you will be perceived as an apparatus operator authority. And most of the time, you will learn more from questions mentees ask you. This keeps your knowledge of emergency driving sharp and effective.
- 6. Practice the most challenging driving obstacle course you know.**
If this is the only thing you do from this list, then you will already be ahead of the game. Challenging yourself and your fellow firefighters with easy-to-organize obstacle courses that can be done in local parking lots will drastically improve your practical firefighter driving skills. FREE, practical driving obstacle course plans can be found on our website, FirefighterDriverTraining.com.

For more Firefighter Driver/Operator Training resources (including video instruction, directions on developing your own Driver Training Course, FREE Obstacle Course Diagram Plans, and FREE Professional Fire Department Driver SOP Templates), go to FirefighterDriverTraining.com.